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EXT/INT. GUS'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

42

Hazel follows Gus inside. She quickly notices all sorts of engraved plaques and framed signs with phrases like "Home is Where the Heart Is" and "True Love is Born from Hard Times." Hazel looks at Gus quizzically.

GUS

My parents call them "encouragements."  
(rolling his eyes)  
Don't ask.

Gus's MOM and DAD (40s) are in the kitchen making dinner.

GUS (CONT'D)

Hey guys.

GUS'S MOM

Augustus, hi. New friend?

Gus's parents don't seem surprised to see Gus with some random girl in their house. Hazel takes note of that.

GUS

This is Hazel Grace.

HAZEL

It's just... Hazel.

GUS'S DAD

How's it going, Just Hazel?

GUS

(abruptly)  
Downstairs if you need us!

Gus drags Hazel to the next room. As she's pulled:

HAZEL

Nice to meet you!

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INT. GUS'S BASEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

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They walk down the carpeted stairs - Gus having an easier time with his one leg than Hazel is with her oxygen tank and weak lungs.

Eventually they arrive at Gus's basement bedroom. There's a TV with a video game console, a few band posters, and a whole host of basketball memorabilia (autographed sneakers, school trophies, framed images etc.) Gus sees her looking at them.

(CONTINUED)

GUS  
I used to play.

HAZEL  
Must have been pretty good.

GUS  
These are mine. And these. The rest of  
it's just cancer perks.

Gus grabs a DVD from his stack of DVDs. Hazel sits down on  
the bed, her breathing noticeably heavier.

HAZEL  
Need to sit.

Gus sits down next to her on the bed.

HAZEL (CONT'D)  
Don't get any ideas.  
(catching her breath)  
All that standing... and stairs... and  
then more standing... lotta standing for  
me.

GUS  
I understand.

HAZEL  
I'll be fine in a minute. Unless I faint.  
I'm a bit of a Victorian lady, fainting-  
wise.

Gus smiles. He waits for her breathing to slow down. In time:

GUS  
You ok?

Hazel nods, smiles.

GUS (CONT'D)  
So what's your story?

HAZEL  
I already told you my story. I was  
diagnosed --

GUS  
Not your cancer story. Your story.  
Interests, hobbies, passions, weird  
fetishes...

HAZEL

Um...

GUS

Don't tell me you're one of those people who becomes their disease.

HAZEL

No. I'm just... I don't know... un-extraordinary.

GUS

I reject that out of hand.  
(beat, Hazel shrugs)  
Think of something you love. First thing that comes to mind.

HAZEL

"An Imperial Affliction."

GUS

Ok. What's that?

HAZEL

It's a novel. My favorite novel.

GUS

Does it have zombies?

HAZEL

(laughing)  
What? No.

GUS

Stormtroopers.

HAZEL

Seriously?  
(he shrugs)  
It's not that kind of book.

GUS

Sounds horrible.

HAZEL

It's not, it's... kind of my bible actually.

GUS

Interesting. What's it about?

HAZEL

Cancer.

(off his look)

But not in that way, trust me. The guy who wrote it, Peter Van Houten, he's... well, the only person I've ever come across who seems to a) understand what it's like to be dying and b) not have died.

GUS

(intrigued)

In that case... I am going to read this horrible book with the boring title that does not contain zombies or stormtroopers. And in exchange...

Gus pulls a book from his bookshelf.

GUS (CONT'D)

... all I ask is that you read this brilliant and haunting novelization of my favorite video game.

Hazel looks at the slim, ridiculous novella. She laughs.

GUS (CONT'D)

Don't laugh, it's awesome! All about honor and sacrifice, bravery and heroism, embracing your destiny, leaving a mark on the world.

HAZEL

(beat)

But mostly it's things blowing up.

GUS

Hell yeah!

She laughs again. She's adorable when she laughs. He holds the book out for her and she takes it. And as she does, their hands get tangled together for a brief, charged moment.

GUS (CONT'D)

Your hands are cold.

HAZEL

Not so much cold as under-oxygenated.

GUS

Hazel Grace...

(beat)

I love it when you talk medical to me.

(CONTINUED)

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Hazel blushes. And off her completely smitten smile, CUT TO:

44 EXT. HAZEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING 44

A LIGHT on in an upstairs window. Hazel's Bedroom.

45 INT. HAZEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 45

Hazel sits in bed reading Gus's novella. Frannie enters carrying folded laundry, notices the new book.

FRANNIE  
That's different.

Hazel shrugs. Frannie looks intrigued.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)  
Did he give it to you?

HAZEL  
By "it" do you mean herpes?

FRANNIE  
A mother can dream, can't she?  
(ALT)  
Feisty! I like it.

Hazel rolls her eyes. At which point, her phone buzzes. She excitedly checks it - only to be disappointed. Frannie notices.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. I'm sure he'll call.

HAZEL  
I'm not worried. Please. It's not like  
I'm waiting for him to call or anything.  
I just... we hung out. No big deal.

Frannie says nothing to that. Her silence says it all. Hazel rolls her eyes. CUT TO:

QUICK SERIES OF SCENES:

Hazel continues "not to wait" for Gus's call. We see her:

46 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 46

Brushing her teeth. And checking her phone.

47 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 47

Watching TV. And checking her phone.